



THE ADVISOR NEWSLETTER

July 2020

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CPAC Leadership Corner

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The New Workplace—Working with Virtual Team Members

By Latrice Benton



Virtual teams have become a fact of the business life, whether federal government or private industry. What is a virtual team or team member? They are usually work groups which have (1) some core member(s) who interact primarily through electronic means, and (2) are engaged in interdependent tasks.

What if your organization that you work for now combines both your own team members, and those that are virtual working for another office, but physically located with you? How does everyone work together in that concept? Is this odd or different for you? Let's first identify why this seems different for you (and maybe it doesn't), but if you have not combined various groups of team members before, it might be a change for you.

Some ideas to navigate this change could be: Get to know the virtual team member(s) – introduce yourselves. Face to face communication is still the best when it comes to interpersonal relations, fostering trust, and just being a professional colleague. Clarify your role within the organization, and get to know the virtual team members, and get to know them – basically what each of you contribute to the overall Army's mission.

It has been found that successful virtual and other team members all have a few things in common: good communication skills, high emotional intelligence, an ability to work independently, and the resilience to recover from the snafus that might arise.

Let's face it, we in the HR world have been transitioning and changing at a pretty rapid pace. This transition is creating a new culture of collaboration, acceptance, and flexibility to build relationships with each other. It also enables us as an organization to use our collective intelligence to develop and accept change and transition by sharing ideas, hopes and aspirations. We can learn from other people and be open minded to different approaches to accomplish the work for the Army – after all, we should all have the same goal!

By treating our new virtual team members with a welcoming attitude and behavior, compassion, and respect, while maintaining an awareness of our different approaches to accomplishing the work - we grow ourselves. We are "hosting" these team members to our house (organization), they are our guests, so let's treat them accordingly. Most of us were raised to treat others as you would like to be treated. They may feel out of place, they may be here away from family and friends and their regular work areas – so let's open our minds and hearts to them. Transition and change within HR will continue at a rapid pace, and virtual workers will be the "norm" in most organizations. We must grab on to the change, hang on (even if we don't understand it at first), embrace it, learn from it, and be open and flexible...and be that change agent for our offices!

Resiliency While Teleworking

Submitted by Raymond Famanian



Staying positive is a challenge amid today's stay-at-home/work-from-home environment but there are resiliency techniques to overcome the possible struggles of working from home. Many employees may find that the first couple of weeks of teleworking is easy, if not enjoyable. However, that tends to fade away as the weeks go by. Employees are now confronted with the lack of child care, daily home tasks, and other possible distractions not normally seen in a normal work environment. But with certain resiliency strategies, it is possible to maintain work output while balancing home life in this new reality of teleworking.

- **Stay positive:** Fight your brain's negativity bias by finding the silver lining to telework – more time to read policy and review work. At the same time, keep in mind every day is casual Friday!
- **Make a Space:** Take the time to create your own work space, ideally near some sunlight so other parts of your home can be for relaxation and non-work activities. Keep work out of the bedroom so you can maintain your sleep hygiene. Don't forget to use a good set of headphones to quiet the noise (especially on conference calls).
- **Keep your Routine(s):** Although this health crisis has upset normal routine, it is important to develop routines that are heuristic, save energy and keep us healthy. It is also key to identify your important routines that help ground your day.
- **Set House Rules:** Many of us live with others (children, wife, husband, etc.). Set expectations such as setting quiet hours, keeping shared space clean, assigning daily chores, etc. Setting these house rules will help you maintain work productivity and balance home life similar to a normal work structure.
- **Exercise:** Even during these times of self-isolation when gyms are closed, you can still plan for walks/jogs/runs around the neighborhood and/or parks. In fact, walking has been proven to reduce stress and improve the management of certain health conditions. Remember to maintain recommended social distancing.
- **Reach out to Others:** Strong social support is critical to maintaining personal and team resilience. Utilize the vast technologies and tools to connect with co-workers to stay productive and connected. Don't forget to reach out to family and friends as they are probably going through the same isolation.
- **Turn off News/Social Media:** Although it is important to stay informed on the constantly changing situation, it is also important to reduce exposing yourself to anxiety-producing news and social media. Allot yourself a certain amount of time for social media and television/news. This will help keep you informed with the necessary information while minimizing your exposure to over-information.



These strategies for thriving during telework are not absolute and are not the only strategies available. It is important to research your own teleworking techniques to find what works best for your household. And remember that we're all a team. It's what we can all do for each other that will help us get through this ongoing pandemic.

Question & Answer

Voluntary Leave Transfer

A Program that Makes a Difference

- Submitted by Noelle Mendiola

The Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP) is a program by which an employee may donate annual leave to another Federal employee who has a personal or family medical emergency and who has exhausted his/her available paid leave.

Q: How do I qualify to become an approved recipient under the VLTP?

A: A potential leave recipient's employing agency must determine that a full-time employee's absence from duty without available paid leave because of a medical emergency is (or is expected to be) at least 24 hours. For part-time employees or employees with uncommon tours of duty, the period of absence without paid leave is prorated. An employee may receive donated annual leave when he/she becomes an approved leave recipient. To apply for the program, the employee will submit an OPM 630, Application to Become a Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, with supporting medical documentation. The form may be obtained by going to the OPM webpage (www.opm.gov), then to tab "Forms" (at the top of webpage), then "OPM Forms" (located on the left side of webpage).

Q: If I am approved as a recipient, is there a limit on the amount of annual leave donations that I can receive?

A: No. There is no limit on the amount of annual leave a leave recipient may receive from the leave donor(s). However, any unused donated leave must be returned to the leave donor(s) when the medical emergency ends.

Q: Are there any limitations on the amount of leave an employee can donate?

A: In any leave year, an employee may donate not more than one-half of the amount of annual leave he/she would accrue during a leave year. For employees with "use or lose" annual leave, the employee may donate the lesser of one-half of the annual leave he/she would accrue in a leave year or the number of hours remaining in the leave year for which the employee is scheduled to work and receive pay. An employee within an agency who wishes to donate his/her annual leave to an approved recipient should submit an OPM 630-A, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, to the servicing CPAC. An employee from outside the agency who wishes to donate his/her annual leave to an approved leave recipient should submit an OPM 630-B, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, to his/her servicing CPAC. Forms are available at www.opm.gov.

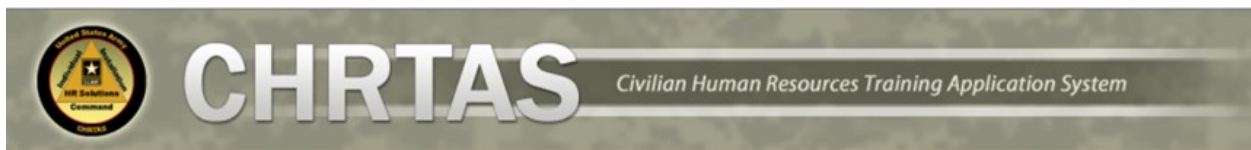
Q: Where can I find additional information on the VLTP?

A: An employee can review 5 U.S.C. 6331-6340, 5 CFR Part 630, Subpart I, or contact your servicing L/MER Branch at 210-221-9359/0668.



CES Foundation Course

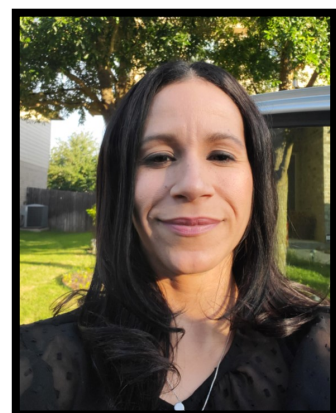
- Submitted by Wanda Ward



The Foundation Course is required for all new Army Civilian employees hired into full-time, permanent positions after 30 September 2006. Foundation objectives are to understand U.S. Army leadership doctrine; increase self-awareness, as it relates to their profession; understand team building, group dynamics, and effective communication. It also assesses individual values and how they relate to professional ethics. You will understand how to manage professional advancement and leverage career potential. Lastly, by taking the course, you will have completed administrative requirements expected of Army Civilians.

Frequency: Initial entry; one time requirement, and is available through distance learning only.

For more information and to register, visit website: Civilian Human Resources Training Application System (CHRTAS) at <https://www.atrrs.army.mil/channels/chrtas/student/logon.aspx?caller=1>



Where is your hometown?

San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Which Branch do you work for?

I work on Branch D (Staffing & Recruitment).

How long have you been with the CPAC?

I have been with the CPAC since May 2019.

What is your favorite part about working at the CPAC?

The commitment I see from my co-workers within my Branch and the other Branches.

What is something most people would not know about you?

I love to travel and have visited over 20 countries!

What is it that you do that sets you apart in providing excellent customer service?

I make sure my customers are treated the way I like to be treated. Their questions or concerns are very important to me. I understand and acknowledge the importance of their mission which allows me to deliver great customer service.

FFCRA, EPSLA, Expanded FMLA...What Does it All Mean for Me as an Employee?

- Submitted by Carlos Reyeshislop

As we are all adjusting to the new “normal” under the pandemic, there have been several acts of Congress enacting new laws that are now in effect. Of particular importance to us as federal employees, is a new leave category embedded in the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Within this act, there is a new section or division “E”, the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA), which provides an additional 80 hours of sick leave (yes, you read it correctly!).

As federal employees, we are eligible to use these additional 80 hours of EPSL, under the following circumstances or reasons: 1) is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19; 2) been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19; 3) is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis; 4) is caring for an individual subject to a quarantine or isolation order or self-quarantine; OR 5) is caring for a child under (18) years of age whose school or place of care is closed (or childcare is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19; OR 6) is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, in consultation

with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor.

Depending on the circumstances, we will need to justify use of EPSL. If using it under reason one, you must provide the local or state order and describe why situation prevents you from teleworking. Under reason two, you must provide the health care provider’s name and contact information along with a description of why the situation prevents you from working or teleworking. For reason four, you must state who is subject to quarantine or isolation and by whom it was ordered. Reason five requires the name of your child(ren), name of the school, place of care, or child care provider that is closed or is unavailable due to the virus, and you must certify that no other suitable person is available to care for the child(ren) during the period of requested leave. You may be asking yourself, what about reason number three, if I am experiencing symptoms which could be COVID-19? If you do (hopefully, you do not!), you must seek diagnosis and, upon receipt of your medical provider, submit the medical certificate to your supervisor.

A couple of very important items when it comes to taking leave under reasons four and five, the law only provides for partial payment while using EPSL for these reasons. That is, only up to two thirds (2/3) of your pay rate for categories number four through six, which means up to \$200 daily and \$2000 total. For reasons one through three, it is covered 100 percent, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total. At this point, since these are

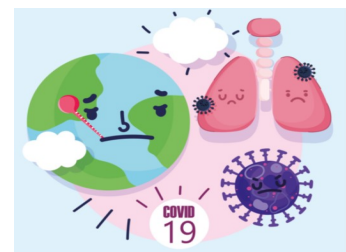
recent categories, our systems are not yet programmed to retain the remaining one third (1/3) of our pay. So, you must understand that, at some point in the future, DFAS will catch up and collect on the debt and no waivers are authorized.

As for the Expanded Family and Medical Leave Provisions (or Division C) of the FFCRA, which grants 10 weeks of FMLA, only employees with a temporary appointment and those with an intermittent work schedule (not part-time or full-time schedules) employees would be eligible for this category. The vast majority of us would not be eligible as we are already covered by regular FMLA entitlements after being employed for 12 months.

Yes, I know, I hear you, I understand you...it is a lot to take in and, hopefully, this has cleared some of the confusion...or not. If you or your supervisor have questions, we are available via email or telephone...yes, keep that social distancing and don’t burst my six-feet bubble!

Online source:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>



Noncompetitive Temp/Term Appointment Authority to Meet Critical Hiring Needs

- Submitted by Jeffrey Telepak



A hiring manager calls you and says: "We have a critical hiring need due to an extraordinary workload as a result of unanticipated events related to COVID-19 (or a similar unanticipated situation). We only need the employee for about 12 months, and certainly no longer than 18 months. I have someone who I believe is qualified for the position and we'd like to bring this person on board ASAP. How can I go about this?"

How should you advise?

Tell the manager you may be able to help them out, because:

Section 1105(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 provides that, if there is a "critical hiring need," the Secretary of Defense may make a non-competitive temporary appointment or term appointment in DoD without regard to the requirements of sections 3321 and 3330 of title 5 U.S. Code, for a period that is no longer than 18 months. This Direct Hire Authority applies to GS and FWS (or equivalent pay bands), but not for positions above GS-15 (or comparable levels).

A "critical hiring need" means the need to fill the position(s) to meet mission requirements brought about by circumstances such as, but not limited to, extraordinary workload or unusual or unanticipated event(s) or circumstances creating the need to fill the position(s). Some other key considerations:

Public notice is not required. However, if public notice is used, the announcement should be concise and easily understood.

Positions are in the competitive service,

and may be filled as either Temporary or Term appointments.

Temporary appointments – initial appointment may be made up to 1 years and may be extended up to 6 additional months, but may not exceed a total of 18 months.

Term appointments – initial appointment may be made for more than 1 year, but appointments may not exceed a total of 18 months.

Candidates must meet minimum OPM qualifications for the series/grade they are being considered for.

PPP must be cleared. ICTAP and RPL are exempt. Veteran's preference does not apply.

Managers may send a resume, PD, and supporting documents to their servicing staffer for review of qualifications before submitting an RPA. If the candidate is found to be qualified, the manager can submit the RPA through their Resource Manager and G1 for approval for the use of this non-competitive Direct Hire Authority. A justification/approval memorandum will be generated by the organization. If approved, the Recruit/Fill action will be routed to the CPAC, and should include all supporting documentation.

When documenting the action, use the appropriate nature of action code as found in the GPPA. The legal authority code is: Z5C/Sec 1105(b), PL 114-328, 12/13/2016.

More information can be found in the CHRA HR Service Portal (Service Now) under Non-competitive Temp & Term Appointments to Meet Critical Hiring Needs in DoD: https://service.chra.army.mil/hr_internal/?id=chra_kb_article&sys_id=132cd225a1d22780d853f0c8284b67be

The Matrix of OPM & DoD DHAs & Other Appointment Authorities, dated 30 April 2020, is also available on Service Now at:

https://service.chra.army.mil/hr_internal/?id=kb_article&sys_id=b2af29b464fc2700d853bc808b4f15a1

Position Management

- Submitted by Christian Camacho



Position management involves the structuring of positions, functions, and organizations in a manner that optimizes productivity, efficiency, and organizational effectiveness. In executing position management responsibilities, line managers are encouraged to seek assistance from a variety of sources; i.e., human resources, budget, management analysis, and other special staff elements. Expertise from all of these sources can help in developing and administering an effective position management program.

Is your organization practicing sound position management? Position management involves the structuring of positions, functions, and organizations in a manner that optimizes productivity, efficiency, and organizational effectiveness. The law which governs the classification system clearly places upon agencies such as the military services the authority and responsibility to establish, classify, and manage their own positions. The need to achieve an economical and effective position structure is critical to the proper and responsible use of limited financial and personnel resources.

Good position management can be defined as a carefully designed position structure which blends the skills and assignments of employees with the goal of successfully carrying out the organization's mission for program. Sound position management reflects a logical balance between employees needed to carry out the major functions of the organization and those needed to provide adequate support; between professional employees and technicians; between fully trained employees and trainees; and between supervisors and subordinates. In executing position management responsibilities, line managers are encouraged to seek assistance from a variety of sources; i.e., human resources, budget, management analysis, and other special staff elements. Expertise from all of these sources can help in developing and administering an effective position management program.

Good position management also requires consideration of grade levels for the positions involved. Grades should be commensurate with the work performed to accomplish the organization's mission and should not exceed those grades needed to perform the work of the unit. A carefully designed position structure will result in reasonable and supportable grade levels. Since supervisors and managers play major roles in the management and classification of subordinate positions, they are responsible for assuring a sound position structure in the organizations they lead. The Federal classification system allows considerable freedom and flexibility for Federal managers to establish an organizational structure that is not only efficient but also cost conscious.

The Manager's Desk Guide to Position Management and Classification, paragraph 1-5 has more guidance on this topic. Please contact the CPAC Classification Branch for a copy of the guide and additional information.

Hail and Farewell



Mary Gray
Venus Vandeventer



Andrea Dowdy
Irma Martinez
Kevin Wolf

Importance of Partnership with Internal Customers

- Submitted by Sabrina Clay, Tim Owens, Lori Ruiz and Cheyenne Love



INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

The word partnership is defined as an arrangement where parties agree to cooperate in order to advance their mutual interest. The collaboration between the Quality Control (QC) Team and each Branch at the Civilian Personnel Center (CPAC) is just that, a partnership. There are times when items that are sent in for QC are returned with either a finding, a note, or even a critical finding. As the QC Team, it is imperative that we maintain a strong partnership with each Branch so that we are able to discuss matters and come to an agreement on how to proceed. This partnership allows us to work as one to ensure what is produced is not only accurate, but of the highest quality. Thus, ensuring both our internal and external customers' needs will be satisfied.

The QC Team provides the CPAC with guidance to assist our customers with recruiting/staffing, onboarding, and training. This equips team members with references, guidelines, and policies to handle most situations. The QC Team, along with the entire CPAC, work as a cohesive unit to ensure serviced organizations receive the utmost care and direction when it comes to recruitment, placement, and classification. Some of the tools utilized are building strong relationships with our specialists through our monthly "QC Moments", developing an engaged workforce by fostering an environment that allows for open communication, and working with the Branches to ensure we are all consistent across the board.

Customers also benefit due to better quality of work which can decrease their recruitment time frame by eliminating rework. The QC Team completes an effective inspection of the work produced by HR staffers that is sent for review for the process of producing an error free product, and/or identify common mistakes which is corrected through mandatory training accessible to all. Quality control ensures maximum utilization of available resources thereby minimizing wastage of production time and increasing the efficiency. This type of partnership develops an atmosphere of trust and confidence that is built knowing that the product received is error free.

Partnership with the internal customer is vital for successfully achieving our organizations mission. Rapport and communication are the most invaluable resources an organization can have for its leadership and staff. Open communication is where the rubber meets the road.



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- Submitted by Diana Kent

What's the Latest on DCHRMS...

The foundation upon which DCHRMS will be built starts with the data: data requirements, data placement, data format, and data interaction.

Decisions are being made on which data fields will be required in DCHRMS and which will be optional. In most cases, data currently in DCPDS will be required in DCHRMS. In some cases, data that is currently optional in DCPDS will become required in DCHRMS. DCHRMS will not accept blank data for required data fields during data migration.

If an optional data field in DCPDS becomes a required data field in DCHRMS, we have two options to ensure that data migration will not fail:

1. Proactively update DCPDS prior to migration to ensure there are no blanks.
 2. Ask for dummy data to be inserted during migration, then fix the data afterwards
- Army will leverage Option 1 to the fullest extent possible, and only request Option 2 as a last resort.

A Conference Room Pilot (CRP) is a testing event to validate system functionality and design updates. The 1st CRP is scheduled for the end of June to validate DCHRMS foundational data structure.

DCPAS updated their DCHRMS website at <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/OD/DCHRMS>. Visit their website for information on DCHRMS implementation, training, and outreach, along with newsletters and fact sheets.

How Can We Prepare?

- Assist in any pre-deployment data clean-up efforts
- Watch for communications like this one
- Look for DCHRMS knowledge articles on CHRA Service Portal at <https://service.chra.army.mil/>
- Visit the DCPAS DCHRMS website at <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/OD/DCHRMS>

FSH CPAC OPERATING HOURS



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff is working virtually. Our doors are currently closed to walk-in customers until further notice. However, you may contact your servicing specialist directly via phone or email. For additional information, questions, or inquiries please call (210) 221-1425.

We appreciate your patience and support during this time.